



IDRC Project # 103308-001

Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in ICT4D  
Case-Study

Final Technical Report

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## Synthesis

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a powerful tool to further development projects. They have become particularly critical to initiatives that promote the productive use of digital technologies to improve people's quality of life and development perspectives. Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) contribute to join together different types of knowledge, experience and resources that come together around common interests and goals. MSP enrich and complement the individual efforts of governments, organizations, academia and companies that would otherwise remain isolated and limited. Still, MSP also confront obstacles, limitations and drawbacks. It is precisely for this reason that the rigorous and systematic analysis of the ways in which these partnerships arise and function, become successful or fail, is of great importance to the international development community.

However, there are few documented examples of effective partnership practices that focus on the use of ICTs for development (ICT4D) and poverty reduction. To remedy this unbalance, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is undertaking a series of case studies of current practice in different parts of the world that go beyond a description of the activities or of their outcomes, to look also at the process by which the partnership was built and sustained.

IDRC has funded the Latin American and Caribbean component of the above mentioned research endeavour, which has been implemented by Fundación Acceso (Costa Rica), Fundación Chasquinet (Ecuador) and Fundación Omar Dengo (Costa Rica), under the coordination of the latter.

The case studies are the following:

- Case study 1: Technical Training for Teenage Mothers and Pregnant Teenagers at Social Risks, conducted by Fundación Acceso.
- Case study 2: Windows Tool for Managing Community Telecenters, conducted by Fundación ChasquiNet.
- Case study 3: Costa Rican National Program of Educational Informatics, conducted by Fundación Omar Dengo.

This cluster of case studies has been gathered in a publication both in English and in Spanish. This publication shows the way in which MSP are being created from inside the countries that make up the region and provides a systematization of performance criteria and lessons learned.

The case studies pretend to support the MSP approach in Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to developing better practice in building and maintaining successful partnerships. And they also aim at broaden the existing knowledge base about the particular reality of the region within a context where information coming from the developed world predominates, especially, from the Anglo Saxon world.

## Research problem

MSP are defined here as partnerships among public sector, not-for profit sector, and business sector organizations aimed at resolving the crucial challenges faced by societies. These alliances characterize themselves through the strategic pooling of resources and competencies each of the participants bring; and through being based on equality, shared risk-taking, shared contributions, and mutual benefit.

The three chosen examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships were the following:

1. The project entitled Technical Training for Teenage Mothers and Pregnant Teenagers at Social Risk in Costa Rica: Fundación Acceso documents the partnership built to offer training in technical areas to this population. This partnership involved the participation of Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (a university of great prestige that specializes in science and technology) and Patronato Nacional de la Infancia (PANI) (the public authority that oversees children in need). Other entities involved in this project are Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (the public office in charge of gender issues), Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (the public entity in charge of the social welfare policies), and Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (a private, non-profit organization).
2. Fundación ChasquiNet presents the second study entitled Windows Tool for Managing Community Telecenters: This is a project that involved the collaboration of the Organization of American States (OAS), Microsoft®, and Fundación ChasquiNet to provide community telecenters in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with the possibility of using software that would facilitate their administrative and operational management.
3. The third study has been carried out by Fundación Omar Dengo (FOD) about the National Program of Educational Informatics: The work documents the genesis, and evolution of the partnership that promoted this initiative geared toward the inclusion of ICTs in the public educational system of Costa Rica. This partnership was comprised at its core by Fundación Omar Dengo and the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) and by other stakeholders from the business and academic sectors and from the international cooperation.

All three cases were to be studied from the viewpoint of the following four major components:

- The objectives pursued by the multi-stakeholder partnership with respect to the greater development goals for digital technology
- The organizations involved in the partnership, their roles and responsibilities.
- The process followed for the establishment of the partnership and for the development of joint efforts.
- The results obtained and the value added as a result of the multi-sector cooperation

Some of the main questions that were to be answered in the studies are the following:

- What factors influence the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships in each case and in the region?
- What was the resource mobilization strategy developed by the multi-stakeholder partnership?
- What makes multi-stakeholder partnerships successful?
- Was the establishment of a multi-stakeholder partnership needed to attain the objectives of the projects?
- What effects on the lead organization can be ascertained from its participation on a multi-stakeholder partnership?

## **Research findings**

The project has systematized the lessons learned in the three experiences that have been studied, around two categories: 1) factors that contribute to the success of partnerships and 2) factors that hinder them. These can be considered the end research findings of the case studies and are explained with detail in the section “Final conclusions” of the book. Next, these factors are briefly summarized.

The success of multi-stakeholder partnerships is due to a combination of factors ranging from the personal dispositions of those heading the organizations, to the historical and socioeconomic speculation surrounding the launching and eventual evolution of the initiative. Figure 1 presents the traits that contribute to the progress of partnerships according to the conducted case study research.

Figure 1. Factors that contribute to the progress of a partnership

- ✓ Acknowledgement of mutual needs and complementarities
  - ✓ Disposition and personal will for understanding
  - ✓ Equality in the contributions and benefits
  - ✓ Equality in the decision making process
  - ✓ Respect and communication capacity
  - ✓ Direct and honest communication patterns
  - ✓ Delimitation of the purpose
  - ✓ Professional rigor and discipline
  - ✓ Clarity of roles, interests, and expectations
  - ✓ Potential of and interest in the project
  - ✓ Understanding of the local partners' and beneficiaries' needs
  - ✓ Evaluation, feedback, and maintenance
  - ✓ Support and knowledge of the context
  - ✓ Openness and flexibility to review and renegotiate agreements
  - ✓ Establishment of long-lasting ties

The following figure shows the factors that may hinder the progress of partnerships according to the lessons learned that were drawn from the experiences analyzed.

Figure 2. Factors that hinder the progress of partnerships

- ✓ Lack of knowledge, openness, and adjustment to each other
- ✓ Difficulties to match individual objectives
- ✓ Lack of transparency
- ✓ Asymmetry and lack of participation in the decision making process
- ✓ Lack of recognition and problems regarding the project ownership
- ✓ Lack of clarity about roles and conditions under which the project is to be developed
- ✓ Interference of personal or political interests
- ✓ Lack of interest
- ✓ Lack of continuity of the people in charge of the project in one of the stakeholders
- ✓ Prejudice and mistrust among sectors
- ✓ Impunity
- ✓ Lack of participation of key stakeholders in the partnership

## **Fulfillment of objectives**

The overall objective or purpose of the research support project was to produce knowledge in support of the multi-stakeholder partnership, digital technologies for development approach in Latin America and the Caribbean through systematizing performance criteria and lessons learned during experiences undergone in the region.

The general purpose of the project has been successfully fulfilled. A case study research has been conducted, showing performance criteria and lessons learned during three experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships driven by Latin American and Caribbean based organizations in the field of digital technologies for development. The publication that has been produced provides valuable guidance for other members of the development community willing to improve their partnering practices and for the region in general.

The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

- To design the conceptual and methodological framework for the case studies.
- To conduct case study research and writing
- To review, revise and edit the case studies, and
- To draft and publish conclusions of the overall multi-stakeholder partnership case study research.

All objectives were successfully fulfilled. The conceptual and methodological framework for the case studies was designed with support of Paul Greener from Foundation for Development Cooperation and the leader team of the GKP multi-stakeholder partnership case study program, (see Annex 1).

The case study research and writing was completed. Each participating organization prepared a draft version of its case study. All draft versions were presented and discussed in a GKP workshop celebrated in Brisbane, Australia, on October 2005, with the participation of case study researchers from different parts of the world. The drafts were revised and edited under unification criteria.

Finally, the edited drafts and the general conclusions of the research were gathered in a publication.

## **Project design and implementation**

In June 2005, the conceptual and methodological framework was designed by the research team of the Omar Dengo Foundation with the support of Paul Greener, from Foundation for Development Cooperation (Australia), who is the person in charge of the overall GKP case studies initiative<sup>1</sup>. This framework included the following aspects: justification of the case studies, definition of the object of analysis, definition of the report structure, and design of the work methodology.

According to the elaborated guidelines, the sources of information for the preparation of the three case studies should be:

- ✓ Personal or phone interviews with key officers of the organizations in the partnership at different times throughout their history.
- ✓ Questionnaires sent by e-mail to members of the organizations that are or were part of the partnerships.
- ✓ Review of existing information in several formats and internal documents that contributed to rebuild the partnership history as well as the decisions and administrative and financial processes involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously, representatives from the three participating organizations joined the GKP-MSP research team in a workshop held in Cairo, Egypt on 2-3 May, 2005 in conjunction with GKP's Annual Meeting and GKP's International Forum on Cross-Sector Partnerships - Advancing ICT Solutions for Development through Cross-Sector Partnerships. The workshop was the kick off activity for the broad global program of case studies that look at the process of MSPs in the field of ICT4D. In all, 15 people from all around the world participated in the development of a common understanding amongst the group as to what an MSP are, on the principles and processes involved, and what to look for in case-study assessments, to finalize the individual research designs and to introduce interactive tools that can be used to access support from resource people and from each other during the field work. These activities were co-funded by GKP and FDC and estimates of these contributions are included in the attached financial report.

- ✓ Literature review on multi-stakeholder partnerships and on the projects reviewed in the cases whenever books or articles about them have been published.

Once the framework was agreed upon, each of three participating organizations carried out the research and writing of a preliminary draft of the case study between June 2005 and October 2005. The tasks included gathering of information, analyzing of documents, synthesizing, and report writing.

GKP and FDC provided support during this phase of the work via an online platform which allows both for mentoring support, as well as interaction between the different research teams themselves. This platform has been developed and is maintained by the Diplo Foundation.

The three preliminary drafts of the case studies were translated into English and presented at a wrap-up workshop with representatives of the MSP research team worldwide, held in October 2005 at FDC's offices in Brisbane, Australia. Foundation for Development Cooperation, which was hosting the workshop and was in charge of the overall GKP multi-stakeholder partnerships case studies initiative. This workshop was conceived as a wrap-up session before the final write-up stage to share lessons and experiences, harmonize final writing up and to draw out general lessons.

Based in the guidelines drawn from the workshop, the research team of the Omar Dengo Foundation reviewed the final draft of the three reports, and issued recommendations for the final editing of each of them.

The edition of the case studies took more time than it was initially expected. Firstly, this was due to the difficulties of the process of harmonizing content and format aspects of the drafts. The research team of the Fundación Omar Dengo assumed part of the tasks of editing the case-studies. Secondly, in the period initially established for the case studies edition, the people in charge of the project at the Fundación Omar Dengo had to attend several activities that were not previously planned. These circumstances made the Fundación Omar Dengo to apply in March 2006 for an extension of the project. IDRC agreed to extend the end date of the project until October 2006.

During the extended period, the people in charge of the project at the Fundación Omar Dengo changed temporally, due to maternity leave. Apart from this, the edition task proved again to be complex and a decision was reached to hire a professional editor. Besides, the case studies needed to be translated into English again, due to the new versions obtained after the editor's review. All these unforeseen events occasioned delays in the process of preparing the final material for publication of the case studies.

During this period, the team at the Fundación Omar Dengo concluded the preparation of a publication draft, which included a presentation by Clotilde Fonseca, Executive Director, an introduction, the three edited case studies, and the final conclusions alluding to the lessons learned and the performance criteria coming from the experiences studied in Latin American and the Caribbean.

Nevertheless, another extension of the project was required in order to allow for the final printing of the book. The new extension granted by IDRC was March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. In order to find a remedy for the delay, the e-version of the drafts before the graphics work, both in English and in Spanish, were uploaded at the Omar Dengo Foundation website ([www.fod.ac.cr/publicaciones](http://www.fod.ac.cr/publicaciones) and [www.fod.ac.cr/investigaciones/publicaciones](http://www.fod.ac.cr/investigaciones/publicaciones)).

This new extension allowed completing the graphics work and the printing process. The printing company, selected through an open tender, was Lara Segura y Asociados Impresores, based in San José, Costa Rica.

## **Project outputs and dissemination**

The project main outputs are related to information sharing and dissemination and are listed below:

- 170 printed copies of the publication in English “Multistakeholder Partnerships and Digital Technologies for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”.
- 170 printed copies of the publication in Spanish titled “Alianzas multisectoriales y tecnologías digitales para el desarrollo en América Latina y el Caribe”.
- Both publications can be downloaded from the Fundación Omar Dengo website and will also be available at GKP’s website.
  - [www.fod.ac.cr/publicaciones](http://www.fod.ac.cr/publicaciones)
  - [www.fod.ac.cr/investigaciones/publicaciones](http://www.fod.ac.cr/investigaciones/publicaciones)
- A synthesis of the different case studies was presented during the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society held in Tunis in November of 2005.
- Publication of an article about the Fundación Omar Dengo case study, in the February 2006 issue of the Digital Learning, an electronic journal devoted to issues of technology and education
  - [www.digitallearning.in](http://www.digitallearning.in)
  - [http://www.dl.csdms.in/feb06/collective\\_thinking.asp](http://www.dl.csdms.in/feb06/collective_thinking.asp)
- Presentation of the publication at the event “Dialogues on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships” that was held on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007. This event was organized by the Fundación Omar Dengo jointly with the Swiss Embassy in Costa Rica and the Global Knowledge Partnership. Among the participants in the activity we must mention Dr. Walter Fust, General Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and several representatives of the Costa Rican government, cooperation agencies and NGOs.

Although the project did not initially foresee further dissemination activities, we will develop a dissemination strategy for the publications, based on the following elements:

- Dissemination of summaries in different electronic and impressed media.
- Sending of copies to organizations and documentation centers.

Besides, thanks to the research on multi-stakeholder partnerships and the reflection on its own experience, the Fundación Omar Dengo has made important contributions on several activities that have been organized by GKP on the theme:

- Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in an Age of Change and Contradiction. In "Multi-Stakeholder Diplomacy Conference", Diplo Foundation, February 12-14, 2005, Malta ([http://www.fod.ac.cr/gkp/msp\\_diplomacy.htm](http://www.fod.ac.cr/gkp/msp_diplomacy.htm)).



- "Re-constructing Partnerships: Experiences in Latin America". by Clotilde Fonseca, Omar Dengo Foundation, Costa Rica and Global Knowledge Partnership. Session "Partnering Strategies: Reconstructing partnerships: Experiences in Latin America." Eradicating Poverty through Profit Conference, San Francisco, California, USA, December 13, 2004 ([http://www.fod.ac.cr/gkp/eradicating\\_poverty.htm](http://www.fod.ac.cr/gkp/eradicating_poverty.htm)).
- Project-Based Cross-Sector Partnerships: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned. In "Making Cross-Sector Partnerships Work: Lessons Learned from Around the World", International Forum on Advancing ICT Solutions for Development through Cross-Sector Partnerships, Cairo, Egypt - May 4-5, 2005 (<http://www.fod.ac.cr/gkp/gkpam2005.htm>).

## **Capacity building**

In regards to capacity-building opportunities and impact, the participating organizations have obtained valuable learning from the research findings. These are highly useful for the organizations from a practical and operational point of view. The lessons learned that derive from the case studies and from sharing knowledge with other participants in the overall worldwide GKP initiative, will definitely help to improve the organizations' partnering processes.

Secondly, the team in charge of the project obtained valuable learning regarding:

- a) The coordination of a joint research effort among different organizations, and
- b) The preparation and edition of texts elaborated by different authors, with diverse authoring styles, and with distinct content emphasis.

Finally, it is important to mention that, from a broader view, the project has also aimed to reach capacity building processes in the region, since its main objective is to strengthen the capacities of Latin-American development organizations for developing effective and sustainable partnering practices.

## **Project management**

One of the main lessons learned regarding the management of the project is the need to make a good appraisal of the time required by the edition, graphic work and publication of a book. This is particularly important when, on one side, the team in charge has other duties and tasks and it is therefore difficult to grant fulltime dedication to the editing and printing process; and on the other side, phases of the edition process involve consultation with people outside the team directly in charge of the process.

The editing of the case studies turned out to be especially costly in terms of the devoted time and effort. This was mainly due to two factors: firstly, the initial differences among the three case studies; and secondly, the lack of a precise timeframe for the different stages of the edition process.

With regard to the support provided by IDRC, it is important to mention that we received constant support, in terms of quick and effective answers to all of our questions and concerns, as well as a generous and understanding attitude in handling the several delays that the project suffered.

## **Impact**

It is expected that the project will:

- Broaden the existing knowledge base about the particular reality of Latin America and the Caribbean within a context where information coming from the developed world predominates, especially, from the Anglo Saxon world.
- Enable implementing actions better and in line with the specific needs and political, social, and cultural characteristics of the region.
- Show the way in which multi-stakeholder partnerships are being created from inside the countries that make up the region
- Serve as a key legitimizing factor in the specific realm of public policy on digital technology for development, pursuant to what experts on the approach have underscored.

## **Overall assessment**

We consider that this project is of great value for the more directly involved organizations: Fundación Omar Dengo, Fundación Acceso and Fundación ChasquiNet; and for the GKP; and also for other development organizations in the region interested in improving their partnering practices. It provides significant clues to better understand the dynamics of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the processes leading to effective and sustainable partnerships.

The project has produced very important learning related to the joint work developed by the participating organizations. This experience is considered by these organizations highly positive because it has allowed them to show the value of cooperative documentation and analysis processes.

This report has been written by  
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